THE

UNKNOWN CITY:

A STORY OF NEW YORK.

BY

W. T. WASHBURN.

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SEYMOUR DURST

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THE PORTRAIT AND OTHER POEMS.*

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"The citations which we may be led to make from this collection will demonstrate that we have here something more substantial than a promise—that the execution of these poems, while uneven, is already marked by a high quality of artistic workmanship and by genuine imaginative power.

Those exacting persons who cannot forgive in some robust American poets occasional shortcomings in scholarship and conventional lore will find nothing to chafe them in this volume. We see ampler ground for satisfaction in the fact that a manifestly ripe and accurate knowledge of books has not stranded this writer on the shallows of dilettanteism, or impelled him, as so many studious versifiers are drifted, toward the treadmill of translation. The author of the "Portrait" has not made his culture the subject of his musings, but relegates it to its true function as the arsenal of expression. We discover here small trace of the puerile vanity so apt to be ingrained in men of letters. We are not marshalled with complacency through the storehouse of memory, but the writer seems to go forth with keen, fresh senses into the bracing air of life, yielding himself, with glad self-surrender, to those aspects of nature which enthrall ear and eye, or to the old theme of man's love for woman, which, on the lips of a true singer, still comes to us reinvested with the spell of a delicious novelty. And here, before noticing some more sustained and serious performances in this volume, we may reproduce two or three of the many love songs which fill a moiety of its pages. It is noteworthy that we do not trace any imitation of contemporary poets in these short lyrics. If, for instance, a model is suggested by the lines inscribed to "Tera," it is rather the gay, airy rhapsodies of Herrick and Suckling.

Beside this, let us place together some stanzas taken at random from the new and singularly effective treatment of a familiar myth.

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AVERY DURST

THE UNKNOWN CITY:

A STORY OF NEW YORK.

CHAPTER I.

GLEASON.

JUDGE THORNE was seated in the drawing-room of his mansion on Madison avenue. The room was furnished with the lavish elegance which marks our American taste. Beside the Judge sat his wife, and opposite them a girl of eighteen, reading.

"It is getting late," said the Judge, presently. "Rhoda, you must shut your book. You were at the ball last night. You must be careful of your health. What would become of us if you were taken sick?"

The girl rose, ran to her father, gave him a kiss, and followed him as he closed the shutters.

"What a weird night!" she said, looking out into the thick mist. "See that man walking past the house; he looks like a giant."

"It is the policeman," said the Judge; and giving his daughter another kiss, followed the two ladies from the room.

Could the Judge have heard the conversation that was taking place in the basement below, his smile would have been less placid.

"Curse the old man's impudence; there's no getting thro' these bars," whispered a man to two comrades.

"Hush!" replied the second; "the bars will soon be wide enough for you."

"For me, yes; that comes from being thin. I always have to go first. Would to God I were fatter. A thin thief is a martyr. You're sure everything is all right? The glass made no noise. Press back the catch. There are no fire-alarms in the house?"

"We searched it two days ago," replied the man who had spoken first, and who was evidently the leader of the party.

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The window was now opened, and the second speaker, pressing between the bars, passed into the basement of the Judge's house.

"I'll follow Alibi," whispered one of the two remaining men, who seemed much younger than the others.

"Stay where you are, Ishmael," returned the latter; "he will open the door in a few minutes."

As he spoke a shadowy tread crept along the entry within, a key slowly turned, a bolt was drawn back, the door opened softly, and the two men passed into the house.

The night was, indeed, the friend of the burglars. All the winter's snow seemed to have turned into a shroud.

The thin man who had opened the door yielded his place to his leader.

"How many are there in the house, Gleason?" he asked.

"You fool, why do you speak my name?" whispered the man who had been thus addressed. "There are only the old man, two women and the servants. No one sleeps below the third story."

"They don't pack them so close as in Avenue A," said the thin burglar, who was evidently a man of reflection.

They remained quiet half an hour or more, listening to assure themselves that no one was stirring.

"The safe is in the library," said Gleason. As he spoke he cautiously led the way along the basement hall, up the stairs into the parlor.

"You locked and bolted the basement door?" said Gleason.

"Yes," replied the other. "No one can follow us, except thro' the window-bars, and policeman are fat."

The three burglars thereupon, with professional method, examined whatever of rich and portable the parlor and dining-room held.

"The old miser may keep his real silver up-stairs," said the thin burglar, lighting a match and holding it carefully concealed between his hands, while his younger companion broke some spoons in two.

"Plated, the swindler!" growled the man they had called Gleason. "They would not pay expenses. Waste no more time; the safe is in the library. Edson gave me the combination."

The three men glided into the library, which was upon the same floor. In a few minutes Gleason had opened a small safe that stood in one corner, and three pairs of eyes were inquiring curiously into its contents.

"Hark!" said Gleason, placing his hand on his breast with unconscious caution.

"Hark!" he again whispered, as the thud of a club striking the sidewalk was audible; "some one has betrayed us."

He stole to a front window, cautiously opened a crack in the shutter, and peeped out. Two dim figures were standing in front of the house, evidently reconnoitering and waiting for reinforcements. Judge Thorne's house stood on a corner of the street, and Gleason ran rapidly from the front to a side window, and peeped from the shutters.

"Caught!" he muttered, with an oath. "Edson must have betrayed us. The basement door is bolted!"

"Yes," replied his companion.

"The bravest way is the safest," said Gleason; "we have but one chance."

So saying, with a whisper and motion to his comrades, he ran to the gas fixtures at the sides of the parlor, and wrenched them off. His comrades at the same time turned on the gas of the main chandeliers. Gleason then drew a match from his pocket, lighted it, and touched it to the lace curtains of one of the front windows.

In a moment the room was in a blaze. The light showed the faces of the burglars; one of a strong, stern expression, a large chin, massive forehead, and a piercing and steady eye; the second, a thin, sallow face, with an eager and restless glance; the third, who seemed scarcely more than twenty, had the reckless look of a generous but abandoned girl. It was noticeable that all three wore the uniform of firemen.

As the fire circled the room, Gleason ran up the staircase, followed by his two friends.

Until this moment everything had been as silent as the unseen step of the pestilence. All at once arose a terrific outcry.

"Fire! fire!" called the watchmen, beating the ground with their clubs.

"Fire! fire!" screamed the inmates of the surrounding houses.

"Fire!" clanged the bells.

"Fire!" shrilled the voices of the Judge's servants, who had wisely clambered upon the roof.

A few minutes later engines were clattering over the streets, and soon firemen were battering at the doors with their axes, and dealing each other vigorous blows for the honor of their companies.

Three men alone listened with silent pleasure to the growing

tumult. Liberty is sweet, even when clouded by the chance of being burned alive.

"Stop!" cried Gleason to Judge Thorne, who was running down the stairs. "You can't go down. To the roof!"

The fire by this time was creeping up the stairways. The Judge hastily returned, followed by the three burglars.

On reaching the top of the second staircase, they saw that the fire had spread more rapidly up the back stairway than the front.

Its forked tongue was already darting across the entry.

"My child! my child!" cried the Judge, as the back chamber door opened, and a woman's white dress appeared beyond the flames.

The girl's modesty had been fatal to her hope of safety. To remain was death; to advance was but a swifter destruction; she knelt down and lifted her hands to heaven.

As she did so, the youngest burglar tore off his coat, watched the flame as it ebbed a moment, then sprang across it, threw the woolen shield around the girl, and bore her to her father.

Mrs. Thorne was upon the story above; they hastened up the stairs, and were soon all in safety upon the roof.

As they issued from the skylight, three or four firemen appeared upon a neighboring roof; these were joined by others, and soon a hose was dragged over the eaves and playing upon the flames.

The strange party passed on to a skylight of the fourth house.

"This is Godkin's house," said Mr. Thorne to his wife, who had crept on, half fainting, through the shivering mist.

The skylight was locked, but a fireman who had joined them forced it open, and the six persons descended.

The joy of the three of the party to whom this adventure had been most unexpected at finding themselves in safety, found vent in mutual embraces and congratulations.

"My child, how you are dressed!" cried the girl's mother, and she looked at the man's jacket thrown over the abridged costume that Miss Thorne's fright had donned.

"How did you escape, Judge?" "I'm so glad you are safe." "Thank God, my child!" "Is there any danger?" "Shall I scream?" "How terrible!" were the remarks with which their friends greeted them as they descended.

When they arrived at the second story, Mrs. Godkin, the lady of the house, took the two fugitive women into her room, and the Judge retired with his friend, to secure the luxury of a pair of shoes, and other evidences of an exigent civilization.

The three burglars cautiously continued their way to the door. A loud knocking, ringing and shouting showed that this house had entered the range of the firemen's operations. As the door opened, a number of firemen entered. The burglars kept in the shadow. Gleason was on the point of slipping from the door, when two policemen ran up the steps.

"Let no one leave the house," said one to the other, and himself went into the parlor.

"Let me pass," said Gleason, coming up boldly to the watchman.

"Who are you?" asked the latter.

"A fireman," said Gleason.

"Stay where you are."

"Let me pass."

As he spoke, the officer heard the click of three pistols. He was a brave man; quick as a flash he drew his pistol, and fired it at Gleason's breast. As he did so, three shots followed, and he himself fell dead.

"Fly!" cried Gleason. "It is all up with me; fly!" he repeated, as the younger burglar hesitated to leave him, "fly!" and the young man stepped over the dead policeman, and was lost in the crowd that was surging about the fire.

In the excitement no one had heeded the shots, and some moments elapsed before the dead and the dying man were discovered. They were taken at once into the parlor and laid upon the floor. Several policemen, the Rev. Dr. Godkin, and other gentlemen gathered around them.

"Give the man an opiate, Dr. Talcot," said the Rev. Dr. Godkin to a physician, who had just arrived.

"For God's sake, give me something, doctor; I suffer," whispered the burglar.

"Stop!" said a police captain, forcing back the physician and bending over the agonized face of the thief. "Tell me first the names of your confederates."

"Tell the officer who your companions were," urged the doctor, "and I will ease your pain."

"I was alone," answered the man, by a strong effort concealing all expression of suffering.

Dr. Godkin, the clergyman, drew near him.

"Tell the captain who your friends were," he said in a kindly tone; "make your peace with God; do your duty; they will give you something to relieve you."

A scornful smile played around the lips of the dying man; he turned his eye from the policeman to the rector, to the physician.

"You torture a dying man to make him betray his friends; I will tell you my confederates;" he turned himself upon his side; bitter memories seemed to make the pain less.

"Send for Judge Thorne," he said; "I have something to say that will interest him."

The Judge entered the room as he spoke.

"Judge Thorne," he said, turning on him an eye that shot forth sparks of fire under the shadow of death; "Judge Thorne, do you know me?"

"I never saw you before."

Again a scornful smile played over the burglar's face.

"The foot does not remember the worm," he said; "I am dying, I will make my confession." The rector, the judge and the officer bent over the lips of the speaker, each with a different expression of interest.

"Twenty years ago," he began, "I was a dry goods merchant; I had a wife whom I loved, a daughter whom I worshipped. One day I saved the life of a child who was playing upon the railroad. I was struck by the engine, and for some months disabled. I had purchased some goods of a kind which a merchant prince wished to monopolize. During my sickness he marked down the price of similar goods to half their cost. I was forced to sell my goods for what they would bring. My business was ruined. There was a mortgage on my house. I was unable to pay the interest; it was foreclosed. I asked my debtor where we were to live. 'Go and live in the sea,' he answered. I begged the railroad directors to pay me something for my injury; they referred me to their lawyer. I rose from my bed a bankrupt. That was nothing. I was still free. One day my wife told me that a man had insulted her. The man was a politician of note. I laid for him and horsewhipped him. A week later I was arrested, charged with committing a robbery. My wife swore that I was at home that evening, but of what weight were the oaths of an accused man and his wife? Policemen and detectives swore to having seen me. You, Judge Thorne, tried me, and sentenced me to three years' imprisonment; do you wish to know my confederates?" And the burglar gave four of the most respected names in the city. The police captain instinctively raised his club.

"You coward!" cried a young man who was standing among the crowd.

The burglar smiled. "When I came from prison," he said, "my wife was dead, my daughter—I hope she too is dead—she had vanished into the night."

"My confederates are all dead, too," he continued. "We made drinking cups of their skulls. It was a poor revenge. Judge Thorne, you had four sons. Your youngest son, where is he?"

"My son! do you know where he is? My son! I entreat you tell me." An expression of agony came over his face.

"Give the Judge an opiate," said the burglar; "he is not used to pain. Your son? Restore to me my daughter—I will give you your son."

"You stole my son. Tell me, for the love of God, where is he?" asked the Judge, with a bloodless face.

"I think we killed him—but the matter has slipped my memory," answered the burglar.

"You dirty villain!" cried a servant girl of Judge Thorne, advancing and shaking her fist in the burglar's face, "there's no place bad enough for you. Here comes the praste," and she fell back frightened as a young priest pressed with an air of authority through the crowd.

The holy father drew near, and waving back the bystanders, spoke a few words to the burglar. The latter raised his eyes with an expression of kindness. The priest administered the last rites of his religion.

"I absolve you from your sins," he said solemnly.

The burglar looked at the Judge, who had not ceased to plead for some knowledge of his son. An expression of humor, mixed with hatred, came over his face.

"When I die again," he said, "you had better give me an opiate."

He was dead!

CHAPTER II.

JOAN MICHEL.

A WINTER'S sunset was coldly gilding the shanties which sat perched upon the rocks just south of Central Park; one of these shanties, which seemed to shun the light, was built in a small hollow, with its back against a rock; two or three goats were playing in front of the door, and some hens nestling in the dirt on the sunny side of the wall opposite; in the middle of the pathway a dead rat threw all the surrounding harmonies into a minor key.

Within this shanty lay the body of the burglar who had been killed the previous night; around it were gathered the few persons whom friendship and interest had summoned; the retiring disposition of most of the thief's friends prevented their appearance; in a corner was a ragged little child, playing with three bricks.

"It is time for you to go home, Bug," said a woman, approaching the child.

"I don't want to go home, mother will beat me," said the little thing, as she rose and put away her playthings.

The woman turned back and sat down by the coffin.

"Would that I had been with him when he died," she said, in a metallic voice, addressing a young man who was standing looking at the face of the burglar.

"He died in great pain; they tried to make him betray his friends, and would not relieve it."

The young man, the latter speaker, was a person of medium height, dressed like a priest; his figure was lithe, and to a practiced eye gave promise of possessing no little strength; his face was made striking, by the fierce and restless hunger of his dark eyes.

The woman herself was of large stature, with a face whose traces of early beauty were overlaid by the masculine and repellant expression which her hard life had engendered; her hair was light, and gathered behind her head in thick folds; these were fastened by a small dagger, whose tarnished gilt handle furnished the only pretense to ornament in her not untidy dress. Though evidently the chief mourner of the deceased, tears and all gentle expression of sorrow seemed forbidden her; in her face appeared rather the stern respect which a soldier pauses in retreat to bestow upon a dead comrade; she knew well, that to her, as to her friend,

life was a hopeless warfare, in which disgrace is the reward of the bravest and the only hope of peace is death.

Besides the woman and the priest, there were four gentlemen present: Judge Thorne, the Rev. Dr. Godkin, the physician who had attended Gleason at his death, and a young man who bore some slight resemblance in face and figure to the priest.

"My good woman," said Judge Thorne, approaching her, "you have a secret which interests me deeply."

"Who are you?" asked the woman bluntly.

"My name is Judge Thorne."

"I know you," she replied; "you once did me a kindness; you have come to the funeral of your brother."

"Madam!" returned the Judge, "what do you mean?"

"Are not you a lawyer and a thief?" replied the woman, with an attempt at cordiality. "You are welcome."

"Do not get angry," whispered the rector, not wholly displeased at the Judge's discomfiture; "remember your object."

"My good woman," he added, pressing the Judge aside, "would you not like some funeral service performed over the departed?"

"Who are you?" asked the woman, turning to the rector.

"I am a clergyman," he answered blandly.

"Ah," said the woman, "you have come to the funeral of your brother. You are welcome."

"What!" returned Dr. Godkin, forgetting his decorum, and closing the fingers of his right hand.

"Are you not also a thief?" she answered, with a hospitable smile, and then turned to the physician, who, with a look of satisfaction at his friend's confusion, had advanced to where the burglar's body rested, and, with an analytic eye, was examining its fine proportions.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"I will give you a hundred dollars for your husband's body," he said.

The woman burst into a harsh laugh.

"You are the best of the thieves," she said. "You come to us for your knowledge. You may have my body for nothing when I die, but I will not sell my friends. And pray, what is your business?" she asked, turning to her fourth guest.

"I am a reporter, or, in the language of aspiration, a sketch artist."

"Ah!" she replied, "a scavenger."

The young man smiled. Flattery, it was clear, made but slight impression upon him.

"I always told him," she said, sadly glancing towards the table on which the coffin lay, "I always told him how it would end. But he was a gentleman, and said the world owed him a living. He had your class prejudices. But what right had he, or what right have you, to live without work? Yet he was better than you. He was a thief, but no hypocrite."

"There are various kinds of work, my good woman," said the rector, soothingly.

"And who gave him or you the right to choose the easy work, and to double the hard work of your neighbor?"

"The law," said the Judge.

"And do the workmen, whose work is doubled by the idlers, make the law?" asked the woman.

"Well, who does make the law?" asked the doctor and reporter, anxious to get at the facts.

"God," said the Judge, reverently.

"The devil," muttered the rector, in whom the law seemed to provoke a certain degree of antagonism.

"The thief," said the woman. "The thief first steals enough to live on: then at his leisure he makes a law that what he has stolen is his own. Do you wish to hear the story of my life? I will tell it in justice to my friend; there are few enough who will speak a good word for him.

"My name is Joan Michel. I am the daughter of a priest." Dr. Godkin gave a shudder. "A few months after I was born my mother died of shame: my father was made a bishop. We were Normans. I was brought up by my aunt, the widow of a rich peasant without children. I was naturally a wild girl, and had but few restraints. I loved liberty and nature, and spent day after day wandering beside the sea. When I first heard the Marseillaise it threw me into a fever.

"Little by little I learned my mother's story: that gave me a hatred of my country. I cursed the priest and the tyrant. I despised their slaves.

"By and by I heard of a new world where rich and poor had equal rights; where no man stole the fruit of his brother's toil nor made woman's love bear the burden of his lust. I yearned to go to it, and as soon as my aunt died I took ship for New York.

"An uncle of mine was living here, and when I arrived, he met

me with his wife and his two children, and took me to their house.

"Two months later a notary sent me a draft for three thousand dollars, the amount of the property left by my aunt, who had made me her sole heir. I told my uncle of the draft, and he begged me to lend him the money. I told him that I was going to buy a farm, and could not do it. He frowned, but made no answer.

"The two following days he repeated his request, and was refused. The third evening, as I was leaving the house to take a walk, my aunt remarked to me that it was chilly, and kindly begged me to wear her shawl.

"On my return home I found a policeman standing at the door.

"'I have come to arrest you,' he said to me.

"I began to cry. 'What does it all mean?' I asked my aunt.

"'He arrests you for stealing that shawl,' she replied.

"'But you lent it to me.'

"'My poor child,' returned my aunt, 'you see to what your obstinacy brings you. We are powerless to help you unless you let my husband have the money you received.'

"'You are a thief,' I cried, angrily.

"She made no reply, but shrugged her shoulders, and I was carried to the Tombs and locked in a cell.

"The next day a lawyer who spoke French visited me. He told me that my arrest was an outrage to which no one who had money should submit. Then he inquired how much money I had. I had grown suspicious, and replied none at all. 'Let me see the judge. I will tell him how it is.'

"'It is impossible to see the judge without money,' he said; 'but give me your draft for three thousand dollars and I will arrange the matter for you.'

"Again I told him I had no money. At this he told me that I belonged to the class of hardened criminals, and that there was no hope for me.

"A few days later the warden came to see me.

"'I am innocent,' I said. 'Let me talk to the judge. It is all a mistake.'

"He listened to me, but made no answer. Shortly afterward came a young man who said that he was an assistant in the District Attorney's office. He asked me many questions, and seemed very kind.

"'I think you are innocent,' he said at length.

"I cried with joy.

"'Then they will let me out. God bless you!—God bless you!'

"'We can't do that,' he replied. 'The law compels us to try you. You will have your aunt, your uncle, and your cousins to swear to your guilt. You have only your own oath against four. Can you not show that their characters are bad—that they are unworthy to be believed on oath?'

"'I know no one in America except my uncle's family and their friends,' I replied. 'How can I show that they are common liars? They make money by lying. They do not throw it away.'

"'Let me think what will be best for your interest,' he replied. 'If you defend yourself the lawyers will steal all your money, and your sentence will be more severe. There are four oaths against one. Unless impeached we have to count oaths, we cannot weigh them. If you plead guilty we will see that the judge awards you the lightest sentence possible. It will only be a few weeks on the Island; then you will be free and have all your money.'

"He rose, shook me kindly by the hand, and left me.

"The only friendly voice I had heard since my arrest advised me to confess myself a thief.

"They tried me. You, Judge Thorne, were the judge.

"I am not guilty. I borrowed the shawl. That was all I had to say. They all swore against me. I was convicted. Your kindness, Judge Thorne, sentenced me to a month's imprisonment upon the Island.

"I kept up my heart as well as I could. When I was released I bought a farm in New Jersey by the sea-shore.

"One day, when I had come to the city to sell my truck, my uncle met and recognized me. I tried to avoid him, but he must have watched me, and tracked me home.

"Presently, one by one, my neighbors grew cold; they turned aside their heads or crossed the street when they saw me approaching. At length none of them would call upon or even speak to me.

"I bore everything in silence until their boys began to steal my vegetables and chickens. Then I called upon their parents to prevent my being robbed.

"'What business has a thief like you,' they cried, 'to accuse honest folks' children?' and they drove me from their houses.

"One day, after I had been in the city, I found my little garden stripped of everything. I had no redress. I sold my farm for half what I gave for it, and resolved to go West.

"I came to New York before deciding what my new destination

should be. Not wishing to spend my money, I became a servant in a physician's family. He was very friendly to me, and asked me what I intended to do. In an unlucky moment he divined from something I said that I had some money.

"A few days later, as I was dusting his library, I saw upon the table two large pictures covered with a piece of cloth. My curiosity would not suffer me to leave the veil unlifted, and in a moment my attention was riveted upon two objects so revolting that it was impossible to tear myself away from them.

"As I stood fascinated with horror, the doctor entered the room. With a smile he told me that these were some fine plates he had just received of persons afflicted with cancer of the eye.

"'This cancer,' he said, 'is at first so small that it can only be detected by the microscope. Thousands of persons in this city who think themselves in perfect health, if you apply this little instrument to their eyes, would learn that they have planted in them the seed of such a flower.'

"Imagine a huge rotten cabbage growing out of your eye. I was seized with a fatal desire to know if I, too, were one of these unfortunates.

"'Doctor, look at my eyes,' I said to him. He applied the microscope. His hand trembled—a tear fell on his cheek.

"'My poor child, there is a germ in each eye.'

"'Is there no cure?' I cried, aghast.

"'It will cost you a thousand dollars,' he said.

"I gave him my money; he gave me a lotion.

"A week later I learned that I had been swindled. I demanded back my money. He told me I was a thief, and drove me from the house.

"Faint from anger, I wandered to the Park, and, seating myself upon a bench, fell asleep. In my dreams I re-acted the scene through which I had just passed.

"'You liar! you swindler!' I cried. At these words of mine, I felt a rough grasp on my shoulder, and awoke.

"'Ha,' said the voice of the policeman who had before arrested me, 'drunk?' and he dragged me to the police court.

'I've arrested this woman for drunkenness and disorderly conduct, your Honor,' he said to the judge.

"'What have you to say?' asked the latter of me.

"'I am not guilty,' I replied.

"'She is an old offender, just off the Island,' said the policeman, carelessly.

Without another word, I was again sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment. This injustice nearly deprived me of my reason. I cursed the New World as I had cursed the Old. This boasted asylum of liberty is a den not of thieves but wolves. When I was discharged, I was penniless, and in despair. The earth, I said, breeds nothing but sheep and vipers; there is but one thing in the world that is pure and divine—the ocean. I will take a boat, and sailing far away, die in the arms of my lover. I walked to the river side to carry out my purpose. It was dusk, and as I drew near the deserted wharf, a man seized me by the arm.

"'What do you want?' I asked, turning fiercely upon him.

"'Your purse,' he answered, dropping his hand.

"'Come with me,' I said, 'I will give you everything I have. I should like to kill a man before I die.'

"The man laughed. 'She is game,' he said, turning to his companion. 'You are too young and pretty to die. Take this,' and thrusting his hand into his pocket, he drew out some money.

"This was the first kind action that had been shown me since I had come here. It caused me to break my resolution. I loved this man. I tried to persuade him to work, but he wanted to be a gentleman like you all, but at least he was an honest thief: he made no pretense. All men who live without labor are thieves. I wonder why people make such distinctions between them."

"My good woman," said the rector, in a voice which tried to conceal his irritation at the length and moral of her story, "your husband, before he died, said that he wished that you would tell us what you know about the little boy that, many years ago, was carried away from Judge Thorne's doorstep."

The woman's face showed no trace of emotion. "If I told you anything," she said, "you would have me arrested. I have nothing to tell."

"Nothing shall be done to you," said the Judge, earnestly.

"I know nothing about it," said the woman. "When I first knew Gleason, he had a small boy with him. He said 'twas his nephew. The child took sick and died. Most children in New York are lucky enough to die young."

"The man said he killed it," said the Judge.

"He was joking," said the woman, pleasantly. "John would not harm a fly, except in the way of his profession. Call here again to-morrow. I will learn what I can about it."

She turned her back upon them. The rector and the Judge reluctantly took their leave.

"Madam," said the doctor, coming forward, "will you take my offer for the body?"

"You have to come to the thief to learn the truth," said the woman, turning upon him. "It will be a long time before one of you butchers offers his own body to advance his science."

"I have left mine for that purpose by my will," answered the doctor.

The woman looked at him with a more kindly eye.

"You look something like a man," she said. "You are better than the others—but not his; you may have mine for nothing, soon."

The doctor turned and hastened from the shanty to rejoin his friends. He had been gone but a few minutes when the priest uttered an exclamation, and sprang toward the window.

"It is covered," he whispered, and running to the chimney, clambered up it.

"Do not betray him," said the woman in a tone of entreaty, to the reporter, who was now left alone with her.

As she spoke, the door was flung open and three policemen entered the room. They looked first at one and then at the other of its inmates.

"The description corresponds," said one of them, approaching the reporter.

"What is your name?" he asked sternly.

"None of your business," replied that gentleman, more accustomed to ask than to answer questions.

The woman looked on with suppressed emotion.

"Arrest him," said the leader of the posse. "I remember your face, you rascal; it was you who insulted me last night;" and he brandished his club over the reporter's head, while a subordinate fastened handcuffs upon his wrists.

As they were leading him away, he turned to the woman. "The scavenger salutes you, madam," he said, bowing pleasantly to her.

"May God bless you!" she replied.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST INNOCENT.

THE young reporter was conducted rapidly to the side door of that huge Doric temple, the Tombs. The iron gate of a small compartment on the right was opened, and the reporter and an officer passed through it.

"Who is this?" cried a savage voice from a dark corner of the room.

The reporter turned to the voice, whose severity showed it to belong to a man of consequence.

"I have been arrested by mistake," he said; "I am a member of the press. If you detain me longer, you will suffer for it."

"Ha!" cried the voice, "another innocent! This is too much for one day;" and the speaker came into the light.

The reporter looked curiously at the new face, which was not unworthy a moment's study. It was a face which, had mankind been descended from the elephant, would have stood high on the roll of beauty. But to the snob-nosed ideal of our generation, nothing could appear more homely. All that the most jealous husband desires in the friends of his wife—all that the frailest woman could wish to aid her prayers against temptation—this face would have abundantly supplied. Had Trojan Paris been its lucky possessor, it would have protected him better than a thousand Hectors. It was a face to keep prisons tranquil, for the most savage prisoner, as he looked upon it, said, "I am revenged!"

"Mr. Warden," said the officer in charge of the prisoner, "this is one of Gleason's confederates."

"We are crowded to-night," said the Warden; "shall we place him with the other two innocents, or with Pat Muldooney?"

"Muldooney is drunk, and may spoil his beauty," said the officer, looking at the young man's handsome face.

The reporter was startled at the prospect of a night passed in conflict with a drunken Irishman.

"Mr. Warden," he said, blandly, "so good-looking a man as yourself can well afford to be generous. Give me the other cell. And have you such a thing as a good cigar about you?"

The Warden's face smiled all over like a swarm of bees. It was clear this was the first time in a long life that he had ever been com-

plimented on his personal appearance. He took from his pocket a cigar, and handed it to the reporter.

"Take him to Grey's cell," he said. "Let him have the best that the prison affords, and no commissions." At this the reporter was conducted by a keeper through the door opposite the one he had entered, into the courtyard of the prison.

"That is the place where Duncan escaped, and where Millard was killed," said the keeper, pointing to a ventilator over the door of a cell. "Duncan was thin, and got through the hole safely, and over the wall by a rope his friends threw across. But Millard got his head through the hole, but could not go forward or back. He kept silent, and let his friend escape, and we found him hanging there dead in the morning. We keep two bloodhounds in the yard now."

This bit of local coloring gave a certain touch of the somber-romantic to the reporter's feelings, as he passed into his cell, followed by the keeper.

"Hullo! my worthy pilot, have you brought another vessel into port?" cried a tall, fine-looking man, with black whiskers. "Did you bring me those cigars? How much was the duty on them? Remember, to-morrow morning my orders are to have no one admitted, unless he comes in his private carriage. One has to keep up a little state in such places," he added, pleasantly, turning to his companion, a man whose clear, bright eye, and round, well-shaped head argued no small degree of intelligence.

The keeper took the bill which was proffered him, bowed meekly, gave the speaker some cigars, and withdrew.

The reporter sat down, and took out his cigar. The man of black whiskers lit a match, and gave him a light, at the same time proffering a cigar to the third occupant of the cell, who, however, refused it.

"As you approached the door," said the affable stranger to the new prisoner, "I felt my right arm throb, and, being skilled in Hindoo divination, knew that some event of importance was about to befall me. Your coming must have an influence upon my life. Suppose—as time hangs heavy on the hands of men of leisure, and the evening is before us—that we each of us narrate a story of his own adventures. You, as the latest comer, shall have the honor of beginning."

This proposal was not disagreeable to the two hearers, and the reporter began the following story, which seemed less tedious to the prisoners than it will, I fear, to more critical appetites:

"My name is Frank Hazlet. I was born in New York and, after the best schooling this city affords, sent to Harvard College. I left the college in my third year involved in debt. This embarrassment, for which I was too honorable to give the true excuse, drew upon me the censure alike of the virtuous, who feared that I might wish to borrow from them, and of the vicious, who knew they could no longer borrow from me. Little, however, did I think of the world's praise or blame, as I hurried from Cambridge to attend the deathbed of my father.

"When I arrived in New York, it was with no little difficulty that I found his residence, which he had recently changed from Fifth avenue to Kleine Deutschland.

"My mother had died many years ago. There were but two persons in the world whom I loved—my father and a friend.

"I had always supposed that we were rich, and my surprise at the location of father's new home was increased on entering his desolate room. One friend alone, a stranger and a priest, was sitting by his bedside. My father, on seeing me approach, feebly raised his head, and as I took his hand, answered my pressure with what of strength and love he could command.

"'I have nothing,' he said, with a smile, the only trace of a humor which had once made him the delight of his friends, 'I have nothing to give you, except my blessing and two priceless maxims: "Always search for an object in the place where you would least expect to find it," and "Always do the contrary of what a woman asks." Had I but followed these rules! But, alas! I looked for honor among gentlemen, and I could never refuse a woman. I began life a millionaire. I end it a pauper. You, my son, I leave in the only position from which it is possible to reverse the journey. Think kindly of me, my son, for I loved you with my whole heart.'

"Scarcely had he finished the last sentence when I was an orphan. I sold what little I possessed to give my father a decent funeral, and how I lived afterward, penniless, hungry, and cold, I shudder to remember. The horrors I endured have made the names which the world despises forever sacred to my ear and tongue.

"One day, after my last shirt had been eaten, I was standing in the City Hall Park, with my coat buttoned up to my neck. Around me swarmed that strange army of vagrants, who, from an instinctive superstition that Government ought not to suffer them to starve, besiege its temples.

"As I was gazing wistfully around me, a gentleman approached, looked at me a moment, and inquired if I would like to earn a dollar; a question whose answer knows with the wise neither variance nor delay.

"'Take this letter, then,' he said, 'to its address in Thirty-fourth street; watch until you see a man leave the house; ask him if his name is Mr. Conway; if he answers yes, give him this letter; be sure that you make no mistake about the man.'

"I took the dollar and the letter, and placing them firmly in my pocket, walked rapidly up Broadway until I reached Thirty-fourth street. I marked the house to which the letter directed me, and, fastening my eye upon it, waited no little time without seeing any one either enter or leave it.

"At length the door opened, and a fine-looking old gentleman of at least sixty years came out and, swinging a large cane, walked merrily toward the corner where I was standing. I at once accosted him, and learning that his name was Conway, presented him with the letter. I had noticed that it was directed to Mrs., not Mr. Conway; and what was my surprise, though I emphasized the address, to see the gentleman, with no other evidence of a tortured conscience than a careless nod of the head, proceed to break the seal.

"Mr. Conway began to read the letter with a smile of pleasure at the confidence which his wife was reposing in him. As he continued his expression changed, and recalled to me the face of an old servant on discovering, too late, that his genial after-dinner pipe had been filled with gunpowder.

"'Who would believe,' I said to myself, 'that I should ever fill the gentle office of dun, and myself enjoy that pleasure which I have so often provided for others?'"

"As I was musing, Mr. Conway's face grew calm.

"'Did you write this letter?' he asked me, with a searching glance.

"'I did not.'

"'Who did?'

"'I do not know.

"Mr. Conway gazed steadily in my face for some moments.

"'You look like a gentleman,' he said, at length. 'What is your name?'

"'I do not know,' I replied; for poverty improves upon the Socratic wisdom, and teaches us to know nothing without, to know everything for, a consideration.

"'Look you,' said Mr. Conway, who was unable to avoid smiling, 'I always judge a man by looking him in the eye. You look to me like an honest fellow. Find out for me who wrote that letter, and I will give you a dollar.'

"This offer in the morning would have filled me with joy, but I was now a capitalist, and, seeing that fortune was at length betraying a true affection for me, I refused to undertake the task for a less price than five dollars, to be paid in advance. It was with difficulty that I could avoid devouring my new friend with my eyes, while this matter was at issue, and you can imagine my delight when I saw my boldness crowned with success.

"I promised to report to Mr. Conway that evening, and he walked away, his cane no longer swinging lustily this way and that, but tucked demurely under his arm.

"'I will hasten back to the park,' I thought, when, by some antic of fancy, there stole into my mind the two maxims of my dying father. 'Where shall I be less likely to find this stranger than in this very spot?' I exclaimed, and I determined to remain where I was.

"There was a small restaurant near by whose window commanded a view of Mr. Conway's house, and thither I betook myself, and called for some grateful refreshment. I had, I confess, as little hope of again seeing my former employer, as of recovering an identical glass of water which I might have poured into the Hudson. My conscience, however, spurred me to do something to repay Mr. Conway, and caused me from time to time to glance toward his house. When not so employed, I was, like Alnaschar, engaged in turning my money over and over, until it grew into a fortune that beggared the Rothschilds.

"I had just finished my dream and my cigar, and, with a sigh turned to throw the stump into the street, when I became aware of a clerical gentleman sauntering past the window. The man was of an appearance to attract an idle eye; his square-cut coat, in spite of the heat, was closely buttoned around his neck; his thick, white hair was brushed back from an attractive face; and his step seemed light for a man who, from other proofs, was clearly past middle age.

"As he passed by the open window with his eyes bent upon the ground, my attention was attracted to the perfume of a strong but agreeable essence, which seemed to remind me of the man who had given me the letter.

"'Pshaw! how absurd!' I exclaimed; yet, slight as the incident was, it induced me to keep my eye upon him.

"'His gait, too!' I said to myself, and reflected how much harder it is to disguise one's motions than one's face.

"'I declare,' I cried, with a strange hope, 'if he enters the house, I will follow him;' and I watched the clergyman's steps with a breathless but incredulous interest. He was walking on the opposite side of the street to Mr. Conway's, and, as he drew near the house, one of the parlor window-shades was drawn slowly down. He had reached a point opposite the house. 'He will pass by,' I said, sadly. 'But no, he has crossed over the street, and, as I live, is going up the steps!'

"A moment later I had paid my bill, and stolen after him. I entered the basement area, and rang the bell, which was answered by a pretty serving-maid. 'I am the servant of the gentleman who is calling on your mistress,' I said to her, 'and would be thankful for permission to sit awhile in the hall.'

"'What, are you Dr. Leonard's servant?' she exclaimed.

"'I am his servant and yours, my pretty Hebe,' I answered, and, slipping a quarter into her hand, was ushered by her into the dining-room.

"After a few compliments the girl became friendly, and seemed to think there was no reason, in the nature of things, why the pleasures of society and conversation should be confined to the parlor.

"'I am sorry to be so selfish as to detain you,' I said to her at length. 'Will not your mistress be angry?'

"'So long as Dr. Leonard is with her,' replied the girl, smiling, 'all my mistress cares about is not to be interrupted.'

"I nodded my head wisely, as though I were in the secret.

"There is only one strange thing about my master. Why does he wear that white wig when he would look so much younger and better in his own hair?'

"'It isn't a wig,' replied the girl, with a warmth that showed that the Doctor had not forgotten to make her his ally.

"'I am sure of it,' I rejoined.

"'I would wager my life against it.'

"'I will prove it to you,' I concluded. 'Your mistress has his photograph. When he leaves, bring it to me, and I will show you the dark hair creeping from under the white.'

"Opposition had made the girl quite in earnest, and, as soon as the Doctor had gone, she went to the parlor, and, finding the photograph, brought it to me.

"'I was right,' I exclaimed, striking the table with my hand, 'and you were right,' I continued, turning to the girl. 'This photograph differs from mine. Let me keep it till to-morrow.'

"Having gained my object, I repaid the girl with a kiss, and returned to the restaurant to meditate upon events, and order my future conduct. Twist the matter as I would, the character of the man who had given me the letter grew blacker and blacker.

"'I see it all,' I said, at length. 'The lady will not yield to the godless prayers of the old hypocrite. This letter, addressed to her, and given to her husband, is to excite the jealousy of Mr. Conway, and cause a breach between him and his wife. Indignant or forsaken, she will then lend a kinder ear to the treacherous whispers of the hoary-headed villain. Poor woman! and I am to be an instrument in carrying out such a crime. I will expose it this very minute.' And, marching back boldly to the house, I mounted the steps, and rang the bell.

"The maid opened her eyes at seeing my sudden social elevation, but a second small honorarium convinced her that my conduct, however mysterious, was substantially correct, and she announced my assumed name to her mistress.

"Mrs. Conway soon entered the parlor, and the sympathy which I had felt for the danger of an unseen woman was redoubled when I saw her charming figure and graceful carriage. She was veiled and dressed for a drive, but, though I could not see her face clearly, her dark eyes, contrasting with her golden hair, gave prophecy of a beauty which I am sure was not deceptive.

"'Madam,' I began, as soon as she was seated, 'the person who has just left you has two characters: down town he appears as a man of business; he has just visited you as a clergyman. This morning he caused a letter which was directed to you to be given to your husband to read. This was done, I make no doubt, in order to excite your husband's jealousy, and cause a quarrel between you and him, with what ulterior object, alas! women of such surpassing attractions as yourself can but too easily divine. I thought it my duty to call and warn you of your danger.'

"Mrs. Conway heard my story with an eager ear.

"'I thank you, my dear sir,' she said, at its conclusion, in a voice whose rare sweetness made up the complement of her charms; 'you have done me a service—a great service. How shall I repay so generous a cavalier?' Then drawing from her finger a diamond ring—'Wear this,' she continued, 'in memory of one for whose

sake you have risked much,' and, with a friendly bow, she left the room.

"'Fortune has at length,' I thought, 'recovered the use of her eyes, and has resolved to select a worthy person for her favorite; to money she adds jewels; to jewels what richer treasure is she about to join?' I was proceeding to slip the ring upon my finger, when the last two words spoken by the lady returned to my ear with a disagreeable echo. At the same time, the two maxims which constituted my only inheritance recurred to my mind. 'Always do the contrary of what a woman asks,' I repeated with a sigh, and, after a struggle, resolved to offer up my ring upon the altar of paternal love. Having so determined, I took from the card-case an envelope addressed to Mrs Conway, and, dropping my ring in it, laid it upon the mantelpiece.

"I opened the door, walked slowly down the steps, and was turning to the right, when a policeman sprang from the basement area, and, waving his warlike club, bade me yield myself prisoner. 'You will learn soon enough on what charge,' he added, roughly, in answer to my inquiries, and hurried me away to the station-house.

"Scarcely had we arrived there when a carriage stopped before the door, and what was my horror to see Mrs. Conway hasten after me to the bar, and charge me with having stolen her ring.

"'I am lost,' I thought, but, collecting my courage and my thoughts, I looked eagerly about me. The police captain happened to be absent, and a sergeant was in his chair, whose face seemed to promise something more of honesty and intelligence than the average official. Begging the privilege of a few words with him in private, I explained to him fully the facts of the case, and urged him with all my eloquence to send an officer with me to Mrs. Conway's house to secure the ring, the possession of which I saw was vital to my case.

"The sergeant was so much interested in my story that, though but half believing it, he called a hack, and bade the driver follow Mrs. Conway's carriage to her house. On reaching it, on some pretext, we all entered the house together, and the officer and I, hastening to the parlor, to my great joy found the ring upon the mantelpiece, where I had placed it. After a few firm words, Mrs. Conway was forced to state that she had made a mistake, and I was set at liberty.

"Prudence now urged me to abandon an inquiry of which the

profit was uncertain and the danger sure. Poverty and curiosity have, however, more potent tongues than prudence and danger; and I resolved, happen what would, to penetrate a mystery whose widening wave was involving so many strange characters within its sweep.

"I therefore watched for Mr. Conway at the corner of Broadway and Thirty-fourth street, and, about an hour before sunset, was fortunate enough to see him step from the car.

"'Mr. Conway,' I said to him, 'before going further in this business, I wish to see your letter.'

"He hesitated for some moments, and again looked me in the face.

"'I have never been deceived,' he said, 'by man or woman; 'you do not look like a villain.'

"'Sir, I am a gentleman worthy of at least as much respect as yourself.'

"He made no answer to my foolish outburst, but, after a few minutes, placed his hand in his pocket, and drew out the letter. It read as follows:

"'MRS. STEWART CONWAY:

"'*Madam*,—I have learned that your husband is in the habit of frequenting some of the lowest haunts in the city. In spite of my regret for the pain which it will cause the innocent, my duty to society will compel me to disclose these facts to his fellow-churchmen and citizens.

"'Yours, etc.,

"'MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE
"'PREVENTION OF EVIL.'

"'The object of the letter is obvious,' I said, smiling to think how different was its import from what the amorous instincts of youth had suggested. 'If you are saved from the attack of this rascal, Mr. Conway, I suppose you will be grateful to me.'

"'You are not deceiving me?' he exclaimed, seizing my hand with the eagerness of a drowning man catching at a straw.

"'Deceiving you? Mr. Conway, I will tell you who I am. I am the son of Royal Hazlet.'

"'The son of Royal Hazlet, whom to know was to admire! I heard of his death, but I did not know that he left a son.'

"'I am his son. I have starved, but I have never done a dishonorable action.'

"'This is a strange business,' and Mr. Conway's face again clouded.

'This afternoon my friend Palmer met me at Delmonico's, and drawing me aside, told me that this very morning he had been presented with a threatening letter. With that he thrust his hand into his pocket and gave me the letter to read. It was addressed to his wife, and was similar, word for word, to mine.

"'As we were speaking about the matter, he nodded to our friend Kingsley, who was seated at a table near by. Shortly afterward Kingsley himself joined us, and Palmer whispered to him what he had just told me.

"'Upon my soul,' cried Kingsley, 'this is a deep-laid plot. I have myself received a letter from the same man. It came within an ace of falling into my wife's hands.' And with that he showed us another of those infernal epistles. 'Observe,' he added, 'how cleverly the rascal has worded them. It would be impossible to indict him. He must have retained some lawyer or judge.'

"'Let us meet at my house to-night and sift this matter thoroughly. Perhaps some more of our friends, Lucius or Charley, have been equally favored,' said Palmer, with a chuckle.

"'So it has been arranged that we are to meet at Palmer's house this evening at eight.'

"'Is Mr. Palmer your friend? Who is he?'

"'Palmer is one of the richest men in the city.'

"I reflected a moment. 'Mr. Conway, you must take me with you to his house. Place me where I can see the faces of all who enter. But you must promise me one thing upon your honor: not one word of this to your wife.'

"'My wife!' and an expression of pain came over his face. 'My wife! Are you crazy? I have given myself away to you,' he added, clutching me by the arm, 'but I trust you. I love my wife to distraction. She is the most sensitive being in the world. The least suspicion of me would kill her.'

"'Confide in me, Mr. Conway; I will hazard my fortune on my success. If I deceive you, you will lose nothing except the belief in your power of reading the character through the eyes.'

"In the evening Mr. Conway took me to Palmer's house, and, concealed in an adjoining room, I watched, unseen, figure after figure, each more funereal than the other, mount the stairs, and join its co-victims in the library. I counted ten of them, but my heart sank into my pocket as each face that I eagerly scanned failed to recall any of the features of my protean friend.

"As the room gradually filled, what art could reproduce the

vigorous and varied declamation that denounced the unknown promoter of the meeting; or what barbarous or classic imagination invent a place of torture to which he was not consigned?'

"'Gentlemen,' said Mr. Palmer, at length, 'our righteous anger must not blind our common sense. As practical men, we should aim rather to prevent or cure an evil than to abuse its author. The charges contained in these letters, such is the infirmity of our common human nature, are unfortunately but too true. The writer is probably some servant or detective; my advice is to find him out, and, for a trifling sum, buy his silence. I would propose that Mr. Kingsley be made chairman of this meeting.'

"A nodding of heads followed Mr. Palmer's motion, and Mr. Kingsley, a brisk man of middle age, arose and rapped upon the table with a ruler.

"'Let us pray,' he began.

"These three blasphemous words cost him nine thousand dollars. As he uttered them, his face assumed for a moment an expression wholly different to what it had before worn. I struck my hand upon my knee. 'It is Dr. Leonard!' I cried, and fastened my eye upon him as eagerly as a miner upon his first assay.

"After a few further words from Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Palmer proposed that a committee of two be appointed, of which the chair should be one, to ferret out the plot. Mr. Palmer himself declining to serve on account of his business engagements, Mr. Kingsley selected Mr. Waterson for his assistant. At that name an elderly gentleman, whose restless motions showed him to be a victim of the gout, arose, and, after many appeals to the unseen powers, swore that he would unravel this intrigue, if it cost him his life.

"'With Mr. Waterson's experience,' added Kingsley, as the old gentleman precipitated himself into his seat, 'with Mr. Waterson's experience in all matters requiring firmness and delicacy, I have no fear of not bringing this search to a successful conclusion. There is one thing more,'—and his face assumed an expression of stern command—'it must be understood that we act together. Overtures will doubtless be made to settle with us separately. Such a division would be fatal. We must swig and swing together.'

"'Great heavens!' I exclaimed, as I listened to the applause which followed his words. 'What wonderful man is this! Not a moment's hesitation; not a false note! What a rugged frankness there is about him! Am I deceived, or has Honesty itself turned swindler! Suppose his vigorous fancy should suggest trans-

porting me within the walls of a prison. How easily, with his accomplices, it could be done!'

"While such thoughts were passing through my mind, the meeting adjourned for two days, and, after a short period, Mr. Conway opened my door.

"It would now have been wiser for me to have at once unveiled the whole mystery, but, as I had the game in hand, I preferred a dramatic denouement. After exacting a promise from Mr. Conway and his friend that they would not say a word to any one, I tried to possess my soul in patience until the two days should have elapsed.

"At length the hour arrived, and the careworn worthies, one by one, entered Mr. Palmer's library. Last of all, old Waterson hobbled in upon a pair of crutches, an addition evidently of his last two days' labor. Waterson, as appeared from Kingsley's eulogy, which the groans of the old man confirmed, as soon as he had scented the trail, had hurried with fresh hope from covert to covert until his knees had sunk beneath him.

"'I refused,' continued Kingsley, 'to allow my friend Charles to sacrifice a life so dear to all that is fair and friendly as his own, and so pressed on the search alone. I will omit, however, the details. Suffice it to say that I have found the man. He is a waiter in a restaurant, in appearance about my height, dark eyes, a bass voice, and a quick, nervous step. Some of you may remember him.'

"The man, I saw, was giving a description of me, and his words, it was clear, were not lost on Conway and Palmer, for they glanced at each other with a suspicious look which I did not relish.

"'The rascal is not without brains,' Kingsley went on to say. 'He knows that we are in his power, and his lowest price is a thousand dollars a head. I tried to beat him down, but he says he wants to get a college education and start life like a gentleman, and he will not budge an inch. I am a family man myself, and I cannot afford to have the facts come out. I have drawn my check for the amount; but, as I agreed, I will stand by the opinion of the majority of the meeting.'

"Most of the men, it was clear, were thankful at being let off so cheaply. As they were bumping heads over the matter, Conway and Palmer stole away, and entered the room where I was in hiding.

"'I suppose,' said Palmer to me, with a sneer, 'that you will advise us not to pay the money. You have begun your career well, my young friend.'

"'Sir!' I hissed. But thinking what folly it would be to transfer, at the last moment, the noose which I had fastened around the neck of the criminal to my own, I curbed my anger. 'Sir!' I said, haughtily, 'you may pay what or whom you please. But do not you, Mr. Conway, pay one cent until you have asked Kingsley the name of the man who wrote the letters. That question I will myself answer in person.'

"'That's fair,' said Conway, his eye brightening, and as the two returned to the library, I followed them softly as far as the door.

"'It is agreed, then, gentlemen,' said Kingsley, as they entered, 'that we shall each pay a thousand dollars.'

"'Pardon me a moment,' said Conway, 'but will Mr. Kingsley first tell us the name of the man who wrote these letters?'

"'His name '— began Kingsley.

"'His name,' I repeated, pushing open the door and striding into the room, 'is Edward Kingsley, alias Dr. Gregory Leonard,' and I pointed my finger at the face of the Chairman.

"The suspense of the dramatic situation was broken by two old gentlemen greedily snatching up their checks, which they had incautiously laid down. Then, amid a derisive laugh that ran around the room, Waterson's piping voice was heard.

"'I move that the meeting adjourn until to-morrow evening; Mr. Kingsley's attendance optional.'

"No money, you may be sure, was ever paid Kingsley, and Waterson was so pleased at my graceful carriage of the business, that he secured for me an appointment as Reporter for the New York *Comet*.

"This afternoon I was dispatched to learn some facts about the famous burglar Gleason, when I was arrested by the police as a confederate, and here I am."

"That is a very good church or prison story," said the gentleman of black whiskers, "but my own recent adventures are as much more wonderful than yours, as my skill of narration is inferior to your own."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECOND INNOCENT.

"I AM the son of a man of wealth, who lives on Fifth avenue, between Thirtieth and Fortieth streets. One of my ancestors was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Another was colonel of one of the British regiments stationed in New York at the close of the Revolution. I have an uncle who occupies the most conspicuous mansion in Walnut street, Philadelphia: and one (my mother's brother) who resides in Beacon street, Boston. The Bostonian has, however, long since broken off all social relations with my father on account of the latter's pronouncing tremendous with a j.

"Having had in my youth more money than I could spend, I freely indulged in those vices that win for an aristocrat the respect of the people, and the admiration of his peers. My fair cousins especially, who are as pretty as they are numerous, loved to recognize in my foibles that exuberance of strength which sustains the name of Rutgers against the winds and weathers of time.

"My taste, singularly enough, always preferred the society of ladies to that of milliners or shop girls, who are usually more attractive to men of my rank. Small feet, elegance of dress, a languid charm of manner, a graceful diction, pleased me more than the vigorous health and facile feelings which mark the daughters of the lower classes. I passed most of my time at the club, the race-course, or the ball-room. I made it, however, a point to attend church regularly once a year, and thus gained for myself the support of the clergy. A little scandal, which connected my name with a lady of the first fashion, and a great success at the card-table, had made me an object of general laudation, when I suddenly lost everything. I was guilty of an indiscretion which caused my parents and relatives to discard me, and banished me from society. One lady alone, my cousin, remained true to me. Her motive was peculiar. Miss Godkin is so homely a woman that, in spite of everything she can do and say, she is thought a saint. This piques her terribly, as her ambition is to be considered a dangerous woman. But exert herself as she may, she can make no impression upon her reputation. Alone with this rake, driving with that, at the oratorio with the other, her fair friends will not flatter her tender confessions

by anything except the remark, 'My dear Miss Godkin, how good you are!' This lady, though deeply injured, could not give up the hope that her friendship for so versatile a gentleman as myself might excite a breath of scandal.

"The act that declassed me was the one virtuous act of my life; I married the daughter of a confectioner.

"I had always avoided the society of persons of inferior caste, and by what mad freak of Cupid I was brought not merely to love, but actually to marry this girl, you must see her to comprehend.

"Sophronia unites to a fine physique the manners of a lady. Good as she is beautiful, I discovered after marriage that she possessed a quality without which women would be too charming, jealousy.

"Her jealousy is also, I regret to say, not so ill-founded as one could have wished. As it is, however, always misplaced, I solace myself with the thought that her want of charity may be held to offset my own peccadillos.

Two nights ago I had dropped in for a few minutes at one of Miss Godkin's *soirées musicales*. These, as you know, are attended by young litterateurs who own a few dress coats in common, by a few curious daughters of our bankers and railroad adjusters who wish to see the menagerie, and by clever married ladies who are no longer deceived by the wise monosyllables of their opulent husbands.

"As I was about to return home to Sophronia, of whose displeasure I confess myself not a little afraid, Miss Godkin insisted on introducing me to a lady whose mind I found as bright as her face was attractive. Her hair came down low over her forehead, her mouth was a trifle large, as with all women of conversation, her dark eyes were full of power and expression.

"I said but a few words to her, and was taking my leave when she asked me if I would not call upon her the following evening. 'I will remain at home to receive you,' she said with a smile whose flattery I could not resist.

"The next day I told Sophronia that I was called from town on business, and could not return until the following evening. Experience has shown me that a bold stroke of this kind excites less suspicion than to return home at ten or eleven o'clock with some stereotyped excuse. Having thus set the evening at liberty, I repaired to a central hotel, registered myself as William Grey, partook of a fine dinner, and after looking at the directory walked briskly to the house of Colonel Crocker.

"Now, I have a cousin, a clergyman, who is a sort of conventionality on stilts, propriety fossilized and tricked out in all its frills. With a fine intellect, he is duller than a received opinion, or a reformer's solitary idea; averse to his wife, he would sooner be tortured than glance at another woman. My nature is different, and yet, fortunately or unfortunately, our names are identical. The worthy divine has often grown restive under what he has rudely styled this discipline of nomenclature. Last year, when I was arrested for attending a prize fight, there was no end of head-shaking in my cousin's church. He had often boasted of his large arm, and many old women are still persuaded that this vanity seduced him to witness the unchristian sport of the bruiser. This incident, I know not why, was in my mind when I reached the door and rang the bell.

"'Is Mrs. Crocker in?' I asked.

"'She is not at home,' replied the servant girl, with a look of surprise.

"'Not at home?' I answered, piqued. 'Please give her my card.'

"The girl extended her hand, with some embarrassment, when a gentleman of fine appearance drew near.

"'Whom do you wish to see?' he asked.

"'Mrs. Crocker,' I replied.

"'Mrs. Crocker!' he echoed. 'Have you not heard that Mrs. Crocker is ——'

"'Not sick?' I asked, anxiously.

"'Worse than that,' he replied.

"'Dead!' I cried; 'and yesterday so full of life and health.'

"'Worse—worse than that; she has left her husband!'

"'Pardon me, sir,' I faltered; 'I was not aware of this individualization. But I am sure what you say is true, for to leave so charming a man as yourself must be a fate far worse than death.'

"At these words the colonel opened the door a foot or two wider.

"'Might I inquire your name?' he asked.

"'John Rutgers,' I replied, suavely.

"'The rector!' cried the colonel, trembling, and, though his wife had flown, with a prudent instinct, almost closed the door in my face.

"'I am not the rector,' I added, hastily.

"'Ah!' and he threw wide the door. 'Will you not enter, Mr. Rutgers?'

"My whole life has been spent in chasing the humor of a new sensation, and I gladly followed my new friend into his parlor, and, taking a cigar, asked him to tell me his troubles. At this he began the old story of man's innocence and woman's treachery. I listened to him with the calmness of a philosopher for whom the whistle of the steam-engine has more music than the song of the siren.

"'I perceive,' I said, as the colonel was reloading his eloquence, 'I perceive, my dear sir, from the force and eloquence of your diction, that you are, by nature and education, a scholar of no slight parts. It must console you to reflect that no man of great intellect has ever escaped domestic discord. Let Solomon, Socrates, and Aurelius, the three wisest names of the three nations of antiquity, be your comforters.'

"The smile with which the colonel greeted my remark showed that he was not proof against the honor of being found in such good company.

"'You are right—you are right,' he said, warmly. 'Until this winter I have never been able to read anything except the *Herald* bulletin. Morning, noon, and night, I was blown this way and that by the breezes of fashion which my wife fanned around me. It was carriage here, carriage there, reception, wedding, dinner, funeral, opera, ball—Heaven knows what!'

"'It is the life of a lackey,' I said, and then ventured cautiously to inquire who could have been found to harbor so foolish a woman.

"'There are plenty of people to do so,' replied the colonel.

"And though I repeated my question in a dozen different forms, I could learn from him no more definite locality. At length it grew late and I rose to take my leave. My host pressed upon me several books of philosophy, which I declined. I walked back to my hotel, pursued by that remorse which follows a virtue of necessity. I had half undressed myself, and was thinking that I had not greatly widened the difference between mankind and the ass, when I heard a loud knock at my door. I unlocked it cautiously, and a powerful-looking man pushed into the room without ceremony, and sat down upon the sofa.

"'I have been hunting for you a long time, Grey,' he began, in a dialect that half broke the tympanum of my ear.

"'You must be mistaken, my good friend,' I replied, not wholly fancying the spirit which my new name had conjured up.

"'Mistaken!' said the man, with a hideous grin; 'that's a good un. Come, Bill, let's liquor up,' and he rang the bell for some whisky. 'You and Hendrick are the best fellows in our profession for a disguise, but I can tell you anywhere by that cast in your left eye. Now, Grey,' he added, in an angry tone, 'you played me a mean trick for an old pal; you promised to pay me back that money that very afternoon. You knew how I was fixed. It's three weeks to-day since my teeth went to the dentist's, and I haven't had money enough to lift them. Is that the way to treat a gentleman?'

"'What is the amount?' I asked, surveying my friend's growing bulk with increased respect.

"This inquiry seemed to excite him to fury.

"'The amount!' he cried. 'You know the amount well enough. It was every dollar I had in the world. I've been living for three weeks on spoon food, but I've strength enough left to break every bone in your body if you don't pay me that money. And I will, or my name isn't Hum,' he nodded his head impressively. It was clear that his name was too sacred to be profanely spoken.

"Payment upon compulsion; what can be more odious to a gentleman! And yet the exposure! Mrs. Grundy! my darling Sophronia!

"'My dear Hum,' I said, nodding my head, 'I can pay you five dollars to-day, and the rest next week.'

"'Five dollars!' mumbled the man, disdainfully. 'How long is it since you have eaten fish? I owe that dentist fifteen dollars, and what's the use of teeth unless you give them work? Let me have thirty dollars, and the balance next week.'

"I gave the man the money, not without a silent prayer that I might live to see him hanged.

"'I don't mean to be hard on you, captain,' said the rascal, clapping the bills in his pocket with a villainous smile. 'No one has a freer hand than your own when you're flush. But it sours a man's temper to clap the darbies on his mouth. There was a heap of dead wood in your last haul. Those registered bonds swindle the profession out of no end of money. So you arranged the affair with Uncle David, and are out of hiding? Come round to-morrow to the old stand under the theatre. You'll find Shang and Alibi there.' With these Delphic expressions he shook my hand warmly, pressed his forefinger into my wrist, and left the room.

"This short interview gave me a greater respect for the name of my ancestors than all their virtues had ever done.

"'The sooner I shuffle off this new character,' I cried, 'the better pleased I shall be with myself,' and I rapidly placed my tooth brush in my vest pocket, and drew on my coat.

"As I did so I heard a timid knock at the door, which opened softly, and discovered the piquant face of a pretty brunette peeping into the room. A moment more she had thrown herself into my arms.

"'Chéri, chéri, what an age since I have seen thee,' she cried, and almost strangled me with her embraces. 'What danger do I not run to meet thee but for this moment? My husband would kill us on the least suspicion. His room is in the next entry, and his gout will not let him sleep. Do you know how I learned that you were here? It was the luckiest thing in the world. My husband asked me to open a telegram for him, and at the end of it was the beginning of another, "William Grey, ar——." What a roguish masker you are! I should never know you if I did not love you,' and her eyes dancing with mischief, she tried to pull off my nose. 'To-morrow, chéri,' she cried; 'to-morrow, at Mrs. C——'s, early,' and with a parting caress tripped towards the door.

"As she turned she caught sight of my watch, which I had laid upon the bureau. Snatching it up, she held it a moment dangling at the end of the chain. 'To-morrow, chéri; to-morrow. I shall keep this as a pledge of your coming. You are such a rover. Au revoir!' and throwing me a kiss, she was gone.

"'This rascal's little finger,' I cried, 'is thicker than the other's loins. I had better have jumped into the shirt of Nessus than this infernal name. Telegram. William Grey. What does it all mean?'

"With that I ran to the door, resolved to place as great a distance as possible between my two selves.

"As I flung open the door, I was aware of a grim shadow just outside, that, placing its hand upon my shoulder, with a cold and clammy touch, drew me back into my room.

"'You're wanted, Grey,' he said. 'Don't make any disturbance, but come with me. I should never have known you, if it hadn't been for your old pal. Those false whiskers disguise you so,' and stretching out his hand, the fellow gave them a vigorous twitch.

"This so enraged me, that I straightened my arm, and knocked him down. At once two new men ran into the room, and after being well pummeled by all three, I found myself sitting on the floor handcuffed.

"A crowd of waiters, guests, and heaven knows what nondescripts

gathered curiously around me. Among them was my landlord, who, as soon as I was set on my feet, flourished his bill frantically in my face. I derived some slight Christian consolation by telling him to take his bill elsewhere, and remain.

"Then, amid the jeers of the crowd, which I answered with vague threats of vengeance, I was led down stairs, and placed in a carriage.

"The only solace I could find to allay the pain of the blows I had received, was that the sensation of the Tombs would be novel. On arriving here I at once telegraphed for my friends, Smiler, the lawyer, and Reynolds, the famous portrait painter. I arranged with Smiler that the morning papers should contain a brief paragraph that the Rev. John Rutgers had been imprisoned in the Tombs on a charge of burglary. My wife, Sophronia, has, among other virtues, that most attractive one of never reading the papers; and long before the mistake becomes known, I shall have arranged an alibi.

"My friend Reynolds was intrusted with the gentle task of restoring by his brush the right side of my face to its former beauty. He has a little overdone it, and it is this," said Rutgers, turning his head, "which causes me to have that Janus look, half rake, half angel. Reynolds is engaged in painting the portrait of a bishop, and I think he has put a little too much of that sacred gentleman on my right nostril to harmonize."

Rutgers' narration caused Hazlet to laugh heartily, but extorted nothing more than a smile from the third prisoner.

"Your story," said the latter, "could hardly fail to interest a man who had been wrecked for some weeks upon a desert island; but my own recent experience has been so much more extraordinary, that you must pardon me for regarding yours as commonplace."

With that he began the following remarkable tale.

CHAPTER V.

THE THIRD INNOCENT.

"I AM almost a stranger in the city, having arrived here but three months since from a village near Lake Erie, where I was raised. My mother's name was Bruce, and she claimed descent from the great Scotchman. This fact or fancy had a great influence on her life. Her respect for the spider, which is held in reverence by the Bruce family, caused her to study deeply the habits of that ingenious insect. The custom of the female spider of devouring its male especially pleased her, and, outweighing the lessons taught by all other animals, made her a strong-minded woman, of the most severe class. My father, who was a bit of a city body, and whose early habits had made it hard for him to withstand the assaults of reason, died when I was about seventeen. He left his property, at my mother's instance, half to her and half to a female college. She soon afterwards took for a second husband a man of such fine intellect, that he made life insupportable to every one around him.

"After enduring for awhile his authority, I resolved to seek my fortune elsewhere as soon as opportunity offered. I had rich relatives in New York, one of whom, a great-uncle, had formerly taken some interest in my father. I had never seen him, and, indeed, knew next to nothing of my relations; but, as he was childless, and I was one of his next of kin, I had been led to believe that I should one day receive part of his property.

"I had a taste for law, and had passed a year in a country attorney's office at the time of my mother's second marriage. One day my young sister came to me in tears on account of a punishment given her by our step-father. I took her part, and abused him so roundly that he bade me leave the house. This, I told him, I had long since resolved to do, and added that I was going to New York to push my fortune. My mother was much affected, and after trying in vain to dissuade me, gave me secretly twenty-five dollars, which she had saved, and her prayers for my success.

"I came to the city, but, partly from pride and partly on account of my poor clothes, remained here a month without calling on my uncle.

"'I will wait until I am independent and respectable,' I said to myself, 'before I visit my rich relations.'

"I soon obtained the debatable position of office boy or clerk, with a little bald-headed attorney. This lawyer spent his vital force about equally between poor cigars and newspapers, and allowed me to do all his law business for the sum of three dollars a week.

"Among the few acquaintances that I made was a restaurateur named Clute, whose charges were less criminal than those of others. One day, after my capital had been all spent, I was led in reviewing my conduct towards my uncle to regard it as a little unchristian. This view was emphasized by the fact that for some time I had had but one meal a day.

"In fact, as I entered my friend Clute's, to enjoy this combination repast, I resolved that very day to seek out my relations. I had just finished eating when I saw one of the customers, on receiving his bill, fly into a passion.

"'It is a swindle, and I will not pay it,' he cried.

"'Call me a swindler, and I'll make your nose acquainted with my fist,' returned the restaurateur.

"This well-balanced dialogue at once riveted my attention. My host's agile strength gave point to the humblest metaphor that suggested a personal encounter. His lively temper had not been softened by having passed the previous night at the police station, a victim to a brilliant raid by the police on the sellers of spirituous liquors.

"'What is the matter?' I asked, with the instinct of a profession to which no quarrels are without pleasing possibilities.

"'This man ordered cucumbers and ice cream for breakfast, and refuses to pay for them,' said Clute, sharply.

'I placed my hand firmly upon my host's shoulder and drew him back some distance from his customer.

"'I do not refuse to pay for them,' replied the man, pleased at finding a friend in a moment of danger, 'but I will not be hurried. Deliberation is wealth. My name is Hasty Flint, but I pay deliberate. Besides, this man overcharges me; it's five cents for cucumbers, and he asks fifteen.'

"'It was a mistake on the bill,' interrupted our host.

"'Silence,' I said, 'or I will leave you to the penalty of the law,' and I turned to the stranger.

"His appearance lacked nothing of ugliness to insure his honesty. His limbs were carelessly tied, or, to speak accurately,

hitched to his body; his complexion aspired to the color of well-boiled beef; his eye resembled the toe of a negro, peeping from an ancient boot. I felt at once drawn to him, as a jeweler to a toad, and fastened my gaze upon his face. As I did so I was aware of four small wounds in his right cheek, all close together, as if made by as many stabs from a tenpenny nail. Though not curious, I hate mystery, and this sight provoked my love of inquiry to the utmost.

"'My friend,' I said, 'our host is clearly in the wrong, but why dispute about trifles? Debit my own account, Mr. Clute, with the sum of ten cents.'

"Mr. Flint at once drew a wallet from his pocket and counted out the sum of twenty cents. As he did so a look of pain came over his face, and he placed his hand about six inches below his breast-bone.

"'Can you recommend me,' he asked Mr. Clute, 'to a lawyer near by—cheap and good. Ever since I came to this unwholesome city I have been troubled with strange pains after my meals. I am going on a journey, and I wish to be prepared for any mishap—in a word, I want to make my will.'

"'There is no better lawyer in town than Mr. Turner,' said the restaurateur, pointing to me, 'and he will give you credit for a year.'

"I smiled and frowned at this speech, but taking Mr. Flint to a spare room, at length drew up for him the document he wished My fee, after a severe contest, was finally marked down to the sum of five dollars.

"'I will give you my six months' note for that amount,' said Mr. Flint, and proceeded to write out the paper.

"'Pardon me, my friend,' and I stayed his hand, 'but the moment you have told me what caused those four strange wounds on your cheek you are out of my debt.'

"These words made Mr. Flint glance anxiously toward the door.

"'My dear client,' I said, hastening to remove some suspicion that I saw was lurking in his mind, 'my dear client, I am a lawyer, and, you must see from the prolonged ambiguity with which I have disposed of your large estate, a lawyer of no mean position. Be sure whatever you tell me will be confidential. No torture would induce me to whisper it to a deaf mute.'

"'Thank God, my young friend,' cried Mr. Flint; 'thank God for your noble words. There was something about your face that I loved at first sight. It suggested to me that touching feeling, "I can save something by that man."'

"'I came to New York,' he then began, after clearing his throat, 'about a year ago, from Cleveland, where I was born. There, when quite young, I held a position in a bank, and married a fine-looking woman, by whom I had several children. We lived happily for some years, but at length the widening range of my wife's social ambition gave rise to a serious difference between us.

"'Launch out into business; give your daughters a chance; cut a dash,' she urged; to which I replied: 'Curtail our expenses; pinch a penny here, pinch a penny there, until our little pile grows big and sound.'

"Unluckily fortune lent its aid to my wife's argument. Two old uncles of mine, at the age of eighty and eighty-one, were left heirs to a large fortune. This excited in each of them strong, but different passions. The younger became a ladies' man, and after sowing his wild oats, was reclaimed by the hand of a lovely widow, of whom he soon grew not less jealous than fond.

"The elder became inspired by a strange and unheard-of passion, the love of nephews. This led him in three years to spend on as many nephews several million dollars without a murmur. His generosity sent one of its recipients to the insane asylum, another to a suicide's grave, and a third to Brooklyn.

"My wife was not long in learning of this incredible trait.

"'And you sit here,' she reiterated to me, 'for a paltry thousand dollars, when your cousins are rolling in carriages, their wives covered with diamonds, their children—Bessie, Bessie, come here,' she used to say; 'show your father that patch in your dress and that hole in your Sabbath shoe.'

"In a word, I left my family, and came here to my uncle. He received me with open arms, and at once gave me entire charge of a company that manufactured silver-plated goods.

"This factory, of whose capital stock he owned more than half, was, with the exception of a hundred thousand dollars of United States bonds, all the property that now remained to him.

"Every day I passed two hours at the office; during which time I wrote letters to my children, and conversed about geography with our numerous commercial travelers.

"Every Saturday morning I sent to my uncle's office for a thousand dollars, to pay our workmen and current expenses. And above all, I drew my large salary with regularity.

"In a few months I had learned the distinction between flat and hollow ware. I was called upon to perform a more serious labor at

the end of the first year, in asking my head clerk to draw up a balance sheet. This showed, to my uncle's great delight, that the gross amount of our sales had more than half equaled our office expenses.

"Yet in spite of my success, I longed to return home. From the first this city was distasteful to me. The extravagance of the ladies' dresses, the profanity of the stage-drivers, the struggle for rapid pecuniary settlement, were all evidence to me of the godless spirit that pervades its society.

"At length my desire to return to Cleveland overcame my fear of facing my wife. I resolved, however, that I would first by some brilliant operation add to the money which I had laid by a reputation which had been more tardy.

"Our company, thanks to my uncle's loans, was otherwise, with the exception of a small mortgage, almost out of debt.

"We had in stock about a hundred thousand dollars' worth of goods, which our foolish superintendent at Saybrook had manufactured. Our book account footed up to about thirty thousand dollars of good bills receivable. Customers, owing to the excellence of our goods, began to press their orders upon us. Everything seemed ripe for a bold push.

"One morning I took up a paper and read an account of a bankrupt with five million dollars of debts and no assets. 'What a dishonest city,' I thought, and fell into a long reverie, which ended in my exclaiming: 'My dear children, I shall soon see you all again.'

"A week later I was taking tea with my uncle, at whose house I lived. The previous evening he had eaten some tapioca pudding, and was, in consequence, a little indisposed. I had important news which, as he was afflicted with the heart disease, I wished to break to him cautiously.

"'I have long thought,' I said, 'on what you, my dear uncle, have so often urged. Nothing so disgraces this city as the number of fraudulent bankruptcies that are daily occurring. Credit is the life of business, and as nothing destroys credit so much as a dishonest bankruptcy, so nothing promotes it so much as a bankruptcy above suspicion.

"'Our company had two hundred thousand dollars assets and no pressing debts; all it lacked was credit. This I have now secured for it. I have sold all the company's goods at five per cent. of the list price: I have paid my salary in full, and I have placed the company in bankruptcy.'

"'Put my company in bankruptcy!' cried my uncle, rising to his feet.

"'Think,' I cried, 'of the glory of being the one honest bankrupt in the world.'

"My uncle made no reply, but seizing a fork, thrust it with all his force into my cheek.

"'Begone out of my sight, you viper,' he cried, 'or you shall spend the rest of your life in prison.'

"Fearing that his insanity might prompt him to some act of folly, I left the ungrateful old man and shall start for Cleveland to-night. Will you not lend me five cents to pay my car fare. I hate to break into a dollar bill; it seems to melt away so fast.'

"Mr. Flint wrapped a scarf around his neck and rose to take his leave.

"I had listened to his story with an interest which had soon grown as personal as it was intense.

"'What is the name of your uncle?' I asked, in the faint hope that I might be mistaken.

"'Oscar Terriberry,' he replied. Then shaking me by the hand, and begging me to call upon him if I ever came to Cleveland, he hastened down the stairs.

"'Oscar Terriberry,' I repeated, looking vacantly at my client's retreating form. 'The one man in the world whom I hoped would save me from starvation—ruined.'

"That very day I called to pay my respects to my two uncles; but it was too late. Both old gentlemen had died the previous night, within a half hour of each other, the one leaving all his property to his wife, the other having none to leave to any one.

"Though bitterly disappointed, the pittance I received as office boy enabled me to continue starving, and I kept on grimly at my work.

"My employer had a suite of offices, of which one small room, three removes from the main office, served as his sanctum. This little crib he insisted on having kept warm by a stove which stood in the large office, where I had my desk. This raised the temperature so high that in the middle of winter I was thrown into a fever which cost me my hair and situation.

"I was taken to a hospital, and when I came out was in despair where to turn. At last I resolved to ask my uncle Terriberry's widow, though I knew she had little love for his relatives, for assistance.

"I found, to my surprise, that she was as kind-hearted as she was attractive. She listened to me and gave me a friendly letter to a homœopathic doctress, who was not less skillful with her knife than with her pill.

"The latter lady, on receiving my letter, said that she had often heard of my mother's devotion to the great cause. 'I will employ you,' she said to me, 'at present in proving the effects of some of our pills. This will enable you to exist until something more pleasant turns up.'

"Glad of the chance, I accepted her offer, and every day took a handful of her pretty nostrums to my room. Instead of swallowing them, however, I threw them from the window. Then sitting down I wrote an account of the effects of the previous dose so clear and striking that, as I have since been informed, half the data from which that growing branch of medical science is nourished have been taken from my reports.

"One day the Lady of Infinitesimals came to me with a face of importance.

"'A project is on foot,' she said, 'by which you can make a considerable sum of money. But the matter must be kept in the grave. The stupid public would raise an outcry, and the authorities would suppress it. We wish to show our pupils something that no other school has ever offered. The performance will be fatiguing, but the pay large. Will you act for us?'

"'Certainly, my dear friend,' I answered, 'I will gladly promise anything. Let your only concern be to discover what you wish.'

"'We wish the vivisection of a man,' answered the doctress, archly.

"'The what?' I asked, for the idea, though novel and full of utility, jarred upon my nerves.

"'A vivisection!' she repeated, 'to show the action of the nerves and muscles of the human hand and foot.'

"'Ah, certainly,' I replied, forcing my politeness a little. 'In case of my death ——'

"'There is little fear of death,' she answered, pleasantly; 'only the movements may be somewhat painful. But think it over to-night.'

"I did so, and it would be an error to suppose that I slept the sounder. But my poverty: the debt I owed a sister profession: my ambition: the large reward. 'I will do it,' I cried at length, 'come what may!'

"A week later I was fastened upon a table in the lecture-room, which was soon crowded with a select audience of physicians and students.

"It may, perhaps, be as well to draw a veil over the details that followed. Suffice it to say that every one was delighted, and my devotion to science was loudly applauded.

"The students were especially charmed, and during my most painful contortions I heard one rosy-cheeked girl whisper to her comrade that stiffs were played out.

"And yet what children of chance we are!

"My friend, the doctress, had been brought up all her life in the school of reason. She had now reached a certain age which she scorned to deny. Yet her lips were still rosy, her eye bright, and her step elastic.

"She had been married but few times, all marriages of reason, and her last husband was but just dead.

"Yet, during the very first lecture her eye softened as it met mine, and at my last appearance her hand trembled so that I had to caution her not to cut herself.

"All this my modesty laid to the softness of a woman's heart. What, then, was my surprise after the spectators had gone to hear her pour forth a declaration of love. In vain I pleaded my youth, my inexperience, and her own recent bereavement. Piqued at my demurring, she seized a galvanic battery and gave me a shock that forced me to surrender at discretion.

"She then at once drew out a paper and made me sign the following contract:

"'For value received, I promise to marry on demand, to the order of Emma Brownlow. Robert Turner.' Then untying me, she smothered me with embraces, gave me a hundred dollars, the balance of my earnings, and helped me to a carriage.

"In a few days my wounds were healed, but now began my real torture.

"The pent-up affections of forty years was launched upon my head. Between sighs and tears, half the time in a furnace and half in the ocean, I prayed to be transformed into a flying fish or a salamander.

"'Can Heaven invent a misery to equal mine?' I asked; an inquiry that was soon answered. A few weeks later the doctress caught a dangerous disease from her devotion to a pauper's child, and died.

"My regret at her death was, I confess, tempered by the pleasure

of finding myself free. Imagine my horror on learning that just before her death she had assigned my promise of marriage to an elder sister, a woman ten years her senior, and as hideous as my friend was engaging.

"The day after the doctress's funeral, my new mistress hastened to claim my hand.

"In a moment of rage I swore to her that I would sooner marry my grandmother.

"This made her so indignant that she flew from the house, and that very day had me arrested for breach of promise, and I know not what other horrible charges.

"The lawyers, as the woman herself had had the assurance to tell me, declare that this is a case of first impression.

"Is a written promise to marry to one's order assignable?

"The question is hotly debated, and will not probably be decided for many years.

"As I have no friends to go bail for me, I shall probably pass the rest of my life in that asylum of the good and free, the state prison."

"By the bones of my ancestors," cried Rutgers, "I will bail you out of the arms of all the widows and spinsters in New York. An ingrate could do no less after such a story. But I suggest that we now go to sleep. The night is far spent, and if we are not virtuous in prison, what will become of us elsewhere?"

(*To be continued.*)

Part II. of THE UNKNOWN CITY, by W. T. Washburn, will be published May 24, 1879.

AVER CLASSI

THE PORTRAIT AND OTHER POEMS.
New York. Jesse Haney & Co.

[*Continued from Second Cover Page.*]

Students of the technics of verse will remark, here reproduced, a somewhat elaborate Latin metre, whose unit is that four-syllabled foot exacting the odd sequence of trochee and iamb, which plays so large a part in the structure of Horace's odes. The difficulty of this feat can only be measured by experiment, but all can appreciate the rhythmic effect secured by it, as well as the music which these lines have won from a happy use of alliteration:

> Silvery net, silvery net,
> Woven with care, warily set,
> Lier-in-wait, thief of the sea,
> Win from the deep treasure for me.

In a group of forty or fifty lyrics, there are, of course, marked differences of merit. On the whole, however, the execution is so careful and felicitous that we are indisposed to dwell on minor faults, but pass to some remarkable lines entitled "Science." We have not forgotten "In Memoriam;" but we are of opinion that the new problems suggested by the expanding horizon of knowledge have seldom received more poignant formulation than in the poem from which we make the following citations:

> What art thou, Spectre of Despair,
> Borne upon the wing of night?

We can quote no further from the above poem, but we have given the reader the means of judging what manner of man this anonymous poet is. Certainly it would be entirely superfluous to point out the imaginative power exerted in the above passages. Let us call to mind, for instance, those hints of incalculable distance which astronomers despair to formulate even in terms of time, and then ponder the force of the fine couplet:

> To-night's forgetful fountain spring,
> Where tired time sits with folded wing!

The long poem which gives a title to this volume—"The Portrait"—is a love story, turning on a situation which, so far as we know, is novel, and, at all events, is charming.

Certain it is that an author whose first work exhibits so much of excellence will be heard from again; and he is likely to occupy no humble place among the poets of this country."—*N. Y. Sun.*

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